FOR RECOMMENDATION

TO: Arts & Science Council
SPONSOR: Nicholas Rule, Vice Dean, Undergraduate
CONTACT INFO: vicedeanundergraduate.artsci@utoronto.ca
DATE: April 8, 2020 for April 15, 2020
AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM OF BUSINESS:
Proposal for Modification to Degree Requirements Concerning 100-series and Higher-series Courses

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
Section IV.7 of the Constitution of Arts & Science Council states:
“Council shall consider the content, quality, and requirements of the academic programs and courses of study that lead to degrees, diplomas, certificates, credit and non-credit courses over which the Faculty has authority; it shall consider proposals for the closure of any such programs or courses of study; and it shall monitor the quality and standards of the programs and courses of study.”

GOVERNANCE PATH:
1. Arts & Science Special Committee on Academic Policy [For Recommendation]: April 9, 2020
3. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs [For Approval]: May 6, 2020

HIGHLIGHTS:
The proposal is to replace the current degree requirement concerning the maximum of 6.0 100-level credits that can be counted for degree credit with an overall minimum of 13.0 credits at the 200-level and higher, including at least 6.0 credits at the 300- and 400-level.

The 100-level maximum of 6.0 credits for the four-year, 20.0 credit degree has been in place in Arts & Science since 1975-1976, a time when students were not required to complete programs of study. The current requirement to complete least one Specialist, two Majors, or one Major and two Minors, means that students must complete a specified number of courses at the 200-level or higher to complete their degree; students cannot complete a degree by taking largely 100-level courses. The maximum of 6.0 100-level courses has created challenges for students, including discouraging exploration and making changes to program trajectory, and complicating transfer credit assessment. The proposed change increases flexibility for students, simplicity, and immediate transparency.

The current proposal brings the Faculty of Arts & Science degree requirements into closer alignment with requirements at UTSC, which do not state a maximum at the 100-level, and is resonant with broad consultations at UTM around a similar change.
NOTION OF MOTIONS:

Be It Resolved
THAT the modification to the Arts & Science Degree Requirements, as described in the attached proposal, be approved effective July 1, 2020.
Summary

Proposal for consideration
The proposal is to change the current degree requirement concerning the maximum of 6.0 100-level credits that can be counted for degree credit to be instead an overall minimum of 13.0 credits at the 200-level and higher, including the current degree requirement of at least 6.0 credits at the 300- and 400-level.

Currently, any credits above 6.0 at the 100-level are manually marked Extra, which removes them from a student’s overall credit count and grade point average calculations but allows them to count towards a student’s program requirements and breadth requirements. With the proposed change in policy, there would no longer be a need to mark any courses at the 100-level as Extra due to a maximum allowed for degree credit; courses would only be marked Extra due to a second attempt at a passed course or exclusions.

The proposed change would allow any 100-level course (unless designated Extra for one of the two reasons mentioned above), to contribute to program requirements, breadth requirements, and grade point average calculations, but any 100-level credits in excess of 7.0 would not contribute toward the 20.0 credits required for graduation. This will benefit students by creating:

- Increased flexibility for students to change their program trajectory
- Increased flexibility for transfer students to complete 100-level courses for degree credit
- Increased simplicity and immediate transparency for students concerning how this policy is implemented and what impact it has on their academic progress and academic record

Calendar Language

Under ‘HBA/HBSc Degree Requirements’ in the Academic Calendar:

“a) Obtain standing (i.e., complete with a mark of 50% or higher/P/CR) in at least 20.0 Full Course Equivalents (FCE) that meet the following criteria:

- At least 13.0 credits at the 200+ level, including a minimum of 6.0 credits at the 300+ level. No more than 1.0 credit at the 300+ level in transfer credit may be counted towards the minimum number of 300- and 400-level credits, except transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program.
- No more than 6.0 FCE at the 100-level.
- At least 6.0 FCE at the 300+ level (no more than 1.0 FCE at the 300+ level in transfer credit may be counted towards these 6.0 FCE, with the exception of transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program; students participating in an approved exchange
program may count all 300+ level transfer credits awarded from the exchange toward this requirement).

- At least 10.0 FCE from Faculty of Arts & Science courses. Note that transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program contribute to this 10.0 FCE minimum.
- No more than 15.0 FCE may have the same three-letter designator ("AST", "ENG", etc.). Courses beyond this limit will not be included in the 20.0 FCE required for the degree, but will be counted in all other respects.”

Under ‘BCom Degree Requirements’ in the Academic Calendar:

“a) Obtain standing (i.e., complete with a mark of 50% or higher/P/CR) in at least 20.0 Full Course Equivalents (FCE) that meet the following criteria:

- At least 13.0 credits at the 200+ level, including a minimum of 6.0 credits at the 300+ level. No more than 1.0 credit at the 300+ level in transfer credit may be counted towards the minimum number of 300- and 400-level credits, except transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program.
- No more than 6.0 FCE at the 100-level.
- At least 6.0 FCE at the 300+ level, at least 1.0 FCE of which must be at the 400-level (no more than 1.0 FCE at the 300+ level in transfer credit may be counted towards these 6.0 FCE, with the exception of transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program; students participating in an approved exchange program may count all 300+ level transfer credits awarded from the exchange toward this requirement).
- At least 10.0 FCE in Faculty of Arts & Science courses. Note that transfer credits attained through a University of Toronto exchange program contribute to this 10.0 FCE minimum.
- No more than 15.0 FCE may have the same three-letter designator ("AST", "ENG", etc.). Courses beyond this limit will not be included in the 20.0 FCE required for the degree, but will be counted in all other respects.”

Under ‘Extra Courses’ in the Academic Calendar:

“Extra courses appear on a student’s academic record with a final course mark and are noted as "EXT". Extra courses do not count for degree credit and are not included in calculating a student’s Grade Point Average. However, Extra courses may count in other respects, such as to satisfy program requirements or Breadth Requirements.

Each course with a mark of 50% or higher/P/CR counts for credit towards a degree unless:

- the course is a 100-level course and the maximum of 6.0 FCE at the 100-level allowable for degree credit has already been completed (see 1. below), or
- the course has already been passed and is being repeated (see 1. 2. below), or
- the course lists as an exclusion another course that has already been completed (see 2. 3. below)
1. 100-level Limit and Chronological Principle
Students may complete a maximum of 6.0 100-level FCE towards their degree. Additional 100-level courses taken beyond 6.0 FCE will be designated Extra and will not count for degree credit. Courses are credited towards a degree chronologically. For example, if a student has already passed 6.0 100-level FCE and then enroll in and passes further 100-level courses, the more recent courses are designated Extra. In other words, all subsequent 100-level courses beyond 6.0 FCE are made Extra. An exception to this rule occurs when a student who has completed 5.5 FCE at the 100-level enrolls in and passes a full credit course at the 100-level in a subsequent session. In this case, providing it does not result in a retroactive change in academic standing, the most recently passed half course may be designated as Extra.”

Statement concerning the change in degree requirements:
Effective as of September 2020, a maximum of 6.0 credits at the 100-level for degree credit is no longer in effect. Instead, students must complete a minimum of 13.0 credits at the 200+level and higher, including a minimum of 6.0 credits at the 300+ level. For students first enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Arts, Honours Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Commerce degree prior to September 2020, courses previously designated Extra under the 100-level limit will remain Extra, however such students can in the future complete additional 100-level courses that will not be marked Extra. Requests for retroactive removal of an Extra designation will be considered on a case-by-case basis; students with inquiries about exceptions can contact their College Registrar’s Office.

Rationale
The maximum of 6.0 credits at the 100-level is in place for the Honours Bachelor of Arts, the Honours Bachelor of Science, and the Bachelor of Commerce and includes any on-admission and post-admission transfer credits.

Historical background
The maximum of 6.0 credits at the 100-level for a four-year, 20.0 credit degree in the Faculty of Arts & Science was first implemented in 1975-1976 and remained in place throughout the transition of the four-year Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees to Honours degrees in 1992-1993. When this 100-level maximum was implemented, students were not required to complete programs, although students completing a four-year Bachelor of Science degree were required to complete at least 9.0 credits at the 200-level and higher from courses offered by specific Science academic units. The requirement to complete specific programs of study – either one Specialist or two Majors – was first implemented in 1981-1982.

Implementation of current policy
The 100-level limit is currently managed in Degree Explorer by a degree requirement coded to allow no more than 6.0 credits at the 100-level. If a student exceeds 6.0 credits at the 100-level, this degree requirement displays as incomplete and a student would be ineligible to graduate on this basis, even if all other degree requirements were complete. This requirement remains incomplete until the additional
100-level credits are manually marked Extra by the Office of the Faculty Registrar, reducing the student’s 100-level credit count to 6.0 as well as the overall credit count.

Other Arts & Science divisions at the University of Toronto

- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design (Daniels): The Daniels Faculty currently has the same limit of 6.0 credits at the 100-level for degree credit.
- University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM): UTM currently has the same limit of 6.0 credits at the 100-level for degree credit. Having reviewed the Faculty of Arts & Science proposal, UTM is proceeding with full campus consultation on a similar proposal.
- University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC): UTSC does not have a limit on the number of 100-level credits that students can complete for degree credit.

The case for change

The 100-level credit maximum and the designation of additional 100-level credits as Extra has increasingly presented challenges for students for the following reasons:

- The enrolment requirements for the majority of programs are at the 100-level, unless specific 200-level courses have been approved as alternate options. Students are therefore discouraged from making any changes to their program trajectory and/or from taking additional 100-level courses out of interest lest they exceed the 100-level limit.
- The 100-level maximum of 6.0 credits for the four-year, 20.0 credit degree has been in place since 1975-1976, a time at which students were not required to complete programs. Students must now complete at least one Specialist, two Majors, or one Major and two Minors; these programs require students to complete a specified number of courses at the 200-level or higher. Since the completion of program requirements is a mandatory component of degree completion, students cannot complete a degree by taking largely 100-level courses.
- In conjunction with program requirements, the degree requirement of a minimum of 6.0 credits at the 300- and 400-level mandates that students cannot complete the majority of their degree using only 100-level courses.
- A student admitted with 100-level transfer credits from previous post-secondary studies will have fewer opportunities to complete Faculty of Arts & Science 100-level courses for degree credit, since these transfer credits cannot be forfeited.
- Inquiries and confusion concerning the 100-level limit and its impact on student academic records, both within and outside of the context of secondary school transfer credits as above, contribute to a significant portion of academic advising in College Registrar’s Offices.
- Regularly, students exceed the 100-level limit in their first year of study when they receive transfer credit from secondary school studies (for example, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Higher Level, or General Certificate of Education Advanced Level). These transfer credits can be forfeited, whereas those from previous post-secondary study cannot.
  - The forfeit of such transfer credits allows a student to have their Faculty of Arts & Science courses count toward degree credits and grade point average calculations.
  - While students can request, from mid-April to late May after their first year, to forfeit these secondary school transfer credits, the context for this is complex and involves
detailed academic advising and can result in retroactive changes to their academic record.

- If a student who has completed 5.5 credits at the 100-level subsequently enrolls in a 1.0 credit course at the 100-level, the most recently completed 0.5 credit course is normally marked Extra, possibly leading to a change in grade point averages in previous sessions; the current policy can therefore have retroactive implications for a student’s academic record.
- The University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) does not have a maximum number of 100-level credits that students can complete for degree credit.
- If a student were to transfer from UTSC to the Faculty of Arts & Science and had completed more than 6.0 credits at the 100-level at UTSC, the excess 100-level courses would be marked Extra upon transfer; the number of credits earned by the student would decrease and there would be a discrepancy between the final cgpa at UTSC and the cgpa upon transfer to Arts & Science.

Impact

Impact of proposed change

- Increased flexibility for students to change their program trajectory
- Increased flexibility for transfer students to complete 100-level courses for degree credit
- Increased transparency for students concerning how this policy is implemented and what impact it has on their academic progress and academic record
- Increased consistency in policy across the Faculty of Arts & Science and the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
- Increased flexibility for students transferring from UTSC to retain for degree credit 100-level credits completed at UTSC
- Decreased complexity of academic advising concerning this policy
- Decreased, if not eliminated, necessity for students to forfeit secondary school transfer credits to allow courses taken in the Faculty of Arts & Science to contribute toward their cgpa and overall number of credits
- Decreased complexity of student academic records
  - There will no longer be a need to designate any courses, including courses taken in a previous session, Extra in the context of a 100-level limit

Implementation of proposed change

This degree requirement can be easily coded on Degree Explorer, by changing the current maximum of 6.0 credits at the 100-level to a minimum of 13.0 credits at the 200-level and higher.

Credits at the 100-level in addition to 7.0 would no longer be marked Extra and would contribute to students’ cumulative grade point average but would not contribute toward the 20.0 credits required for graduation.

Students admitted to degree studies in the Faculty of Arts & Science for September 2020 would begin their degree studies under this policy. For students first enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Arts, Honours Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Commerce degree prior to September 2020, courses previously
designated Extra under the 100-level limit would remain Extra, however such students could in the future complete additional 100-level courses that would not be marked Extra. Requests for retroactive removal of an Extra designation would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Consultation

Faculty of Arts & Science Consultation:
- First-Year Foundation Council: Meetings in Fall 2018
- Committee on Teaching and Learning: Meetings on 23 January and 14 February 2020
- Consultation and Communication Committee (C & C): Meeting on 30 January 2020
- Rotman Commerce: Meeting on 7 April 2020

External Consultation:
- John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design (Daniels): The proposal was sent to the Daniels Faculty for feedback on 30 January 2020; feedback has not yet been provided.
- University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM): The proposal was sent to UTM for feedback on 30 January 2020. UTM is proceeding with full campus consultation on a similar proposal.
- University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC): The proposal was sent to UTSC for information on 30 January 2020.

Policy Implementation

Effective Date
This change will go into effect for the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar.

Students admitted to degree studies in the Faculty of Arts & Science for September 2020 would begin their degree studies under this policy. For students first enrolled in the Honours Bachelor of Arts, Honours Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Commerce degree prior to September 2020, courses previously designated Extra under the 100-level limit would remain Extra, however such students could in the future complete additional 100-level courses that would not marked Extra. Requests for retroactive removal of an Extra designation would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Implementation Timeline
This policy change will be published in the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar in May 2020. This policy change can be easily implemented in Degree Explorer, for September 2020 onward, as soon as it is approved.

Approval Path

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